Chlamydia treatment — 100 percent effective?  [1]

Dear Alice,

I was recently treated for Chlamydia by drinking one gram of Zithromax. My doctor says she has to wait three months before re-testing me for chlamydia. I'm not going to have sex until I am re-tested. I was wondering is this antibiotic 100 percent effective? Or is there a chance I may still have it when I go back for my check up?

Your help would be GREATLY appreciated.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Chlamydia (C. Trichomatis) is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STI), and is most prevalent among young adults. It's generally transmitted through bodily fluids such as vaginal fluids and semen, which people generally come into contact with during vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected partner. If left untreated, chlamydia can lead to complications such as pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, and infertility, particularly among those assigned female at birth, so it's great that you're getting treated. When patients adhere to the prescribed treatment plan, antibiotics can be highly effective. That being said, it's a good idea to wait for confirmation that you're chlamydia-free before having sex again.

The medication you mentioned — Zithromax, whose generic name is azithromycin — is a common antibiotic that's been found to be 97 percent effective in the treatment of chlamydia. Another antibiotic often prescribed is doxycycline, which has been found to be 98 percent effective. Alternative antibiotics to treat chlamydia include erythromycin, levofloxacin, and ofloxacin.

Most treatment options consist of a single dose or a seven day antibiotics regimen. It's recommended that individuals undergoing treatment wait at least seven days after the start of treatment to have sexual contact to minimize transmission, whether they undergo the single dose or seven day regimen. Some health care providers will also prescribe antibiotics for an infected person's partner, as they may have been exposed, which could lead to the passing of infections back and forth between partners. Reader, you mentioned that your health care provider will only
re-test you after three months. It’s best to wait for some time after treatment because there may be some traces of nonviable chlamydia that could show up as a false positive test result. It’s also a good practice to have any current or future partners tested to minimize the chances of re-infection.

In terms of prevention, condoms [2] can reduce transmission risk of chlamydia and many other STIs, when used consistently and correctly. It may also be helpful to discuss and negotiate with any current or future partners in order to best reduce the risk of STIs together. For more information on this topic, you can check out the Sexually Transmitted Infections [3] category in the Go Ask Alice! Sexual and Reproductive Health [4] archives.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery!

Alice!
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